



# TARGET ZERO



A Strategic Plan for  
Highway Safety 2000



**Secure Their Future**  
Make Sure Your Children  
Ride in the Correct Car Seats



For Governor and Mrs. Locke,  
car seat safety is a family tradition



## Foreword

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A year in which no one dies on our state's roads — that's our vision!

As part of the Governor's Quality Initiative, the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, in collaboration with the Washington State Patrol and the Washington State Department of Transportation, sponsored this strategic plan for achievement of that vision.

Traffic collisions are the leading cause of death to our young people. We know that most of these deaths are preventable. Sadly, they continue to occur. We know that we can improve the quality of life in this state by ensuring that parents survive to parent, that children live to adulthood, and that teens don't pay for driving mistakes with their lives.

The committee that generated this plan was broadly based. Some of the recommendations in this plan are controversial. Not all members of the committee agreed on every point.

However, we need to think back to the actions of the past. It was not easy for the public to impose the "implied consent" rules on themselves in 1968, as they did in Initiative 242, one of the most powerful moves ever against drunk driving. The 1986 decision to make safety belt use mandatory was difficult, but has saved thousands of lives.

To change our own future, we need to take actions that are as bold as those taken in 1968 and 1986 and more recently when the state adopted an alcohol level of .08 for drunk driving. We need not accept the death of our relatives, friends, and neighbors in traffic as a sad fact of life.

We can't prevent all traffic collisions. However, we should be able to make them survivable. More important, we should be able to limit the injuries so that a person involved in a crash will make a full and complete recovery.

I encourage you to read this plan and to accept the challenge of turning the vision into reality.

Sincerely,

John Moffat  
Washington Traffic Safety Commission Director



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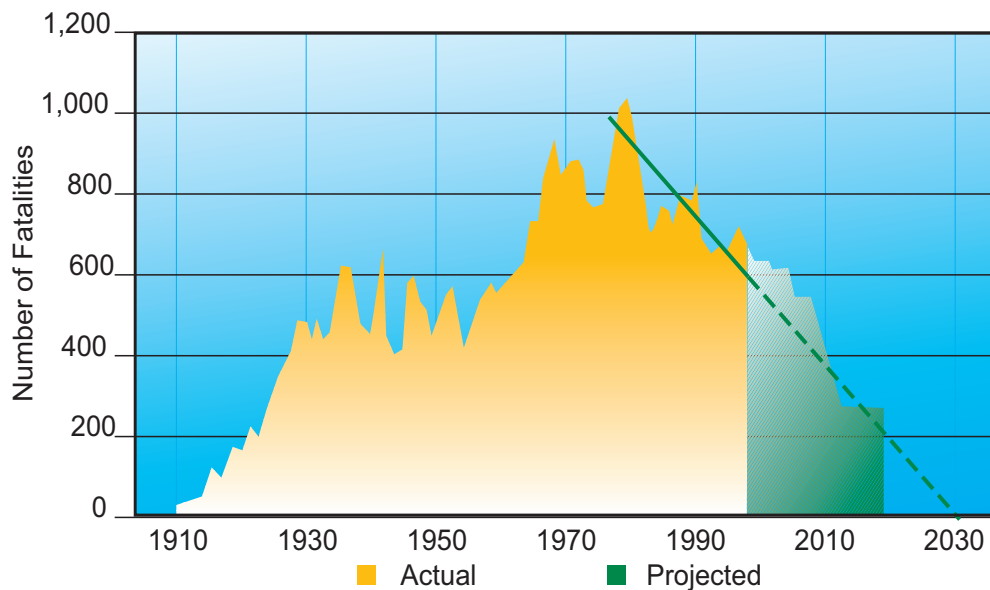
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Our state is a leader in traffic safety. In the past 10 years, Washington State has noted its lowest annual fatality rates since record-keeping began almost a century ago.

Though traffic volumes have increased 19 percent in the last decade, traffic deaths have dropped dramatically — down 23 percent from 1990 to 1999. Our task is to promote this downward trend and improve on it through leadership, motivation, and innovation.

**VISION INTO THE 21st CENTURY  
Washington Traffic Fatalities**



**Why are Traffic Fatalities Declining?**

The decline in fatalities is due in part to many successful traffic safety programs, tougher legislation, improved roadways, faster emergency response, and stronger enforcement. The decline can also be attributed to some of the following historical events:

- 1933 Driving test required for license.
- 1963 Education Act requiring driver education for 18 and under.
- 1967 Creation of the Washington Traffic Safety Commission.
- 1971 Habitual traffic offender law.
- 1984 Mandatory child restraint law for children under age 1.
- 1986 Mandatory seat belt law.
- 1989 DUI youth lose license for 90 days or until age 19.
- 1990 Mandatory insurance required.
- 1993 Enhancement of pedestrian crosswalk law.
- 1995 Law enforcement authorized to take blood of DUI suspect.
- 1999 Drivers are arrested with blood alcohol level of .08 or above.
- 2000 Graduated Driver Licenses law for teens.
- 2000 Booster seat law.

The decline is also due to recent traffic safety campaigns that promote new laws and introduce new ways to avoid problems on the road.



## We can do better

In 1999, over 600 people died on our state and local highways. That's an average of two people killed each day. Despite the last decade's 23 percent fall in traffic fatalities, it is clear that the effort to further reduce traffic fatalities and disabling injuries must not stop.

## What is Target Zero?

Target Zero is a statewide traffic safety plan with three key objectives:

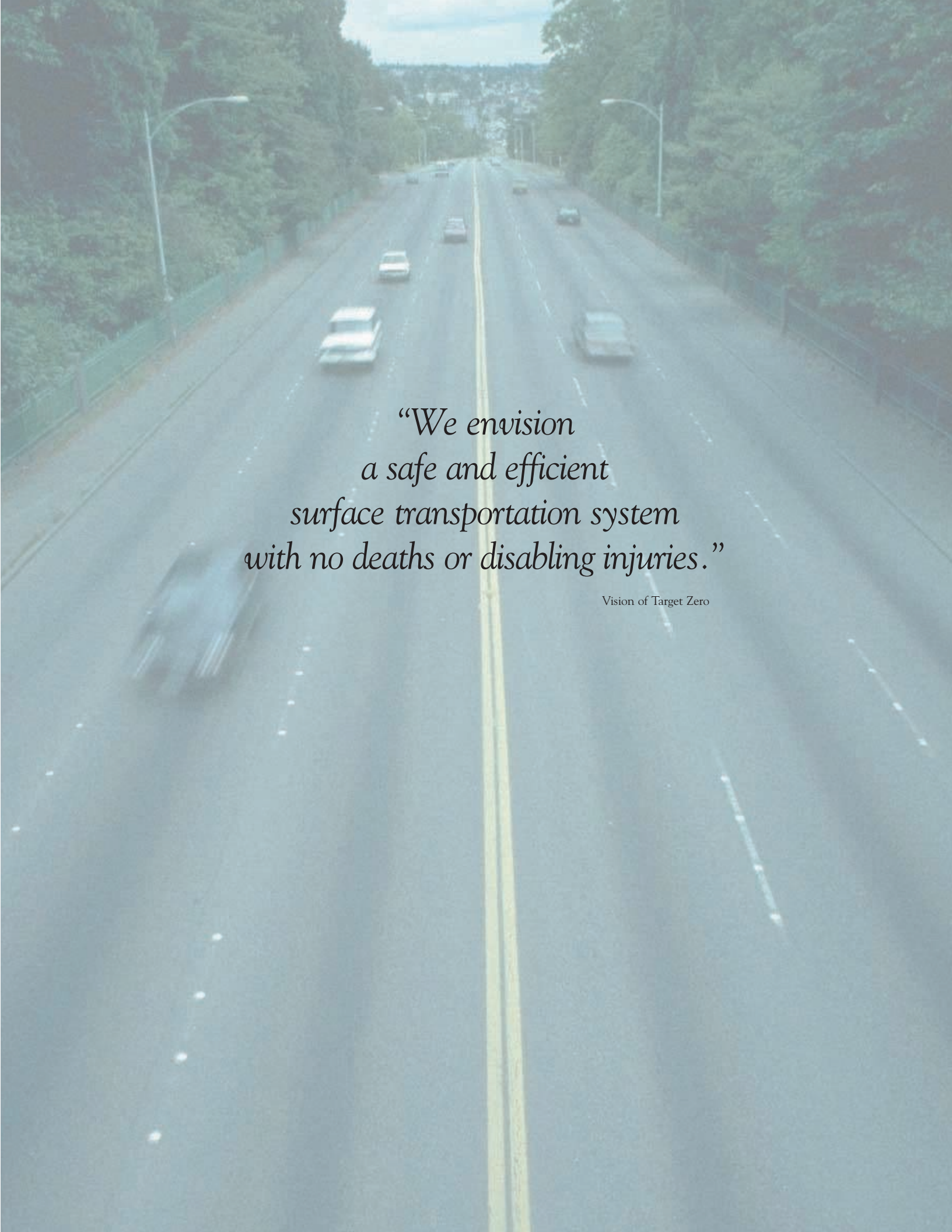
- Recognize and build upon existing safety programs.
- Bring traffic safety partners together.
- Coordinate a statewide safety vision and goals.

The Target Zero Steering Committee, in cooperation with many state, local, and private agencies, will focus on further reducing traffic related fatalities and disabling injuries in Washington State. The plan will support the committee's thirty-year vision, to achieve a **“transportation system with no deaths or disabling injuries.”**

This vision will assist the Governor and the Washington Traffic Safety Commission in focusing the resources and expertise of traffic safety groups on issues and initiatives designed to continue the downward trend in fatalities in Washington State.

Along with the vision statement, Target Zero highlights 12 emphasis areas and recommends over 62 statewide traffic safety strategies.

These traffic safety strategies provide direction to key agencies involved — Washington State Patrol, Washington State Department of Transportation, Department of Social and Health Services, Department of Health, cities and counties, Driving Under the Influence and Traffic Safety Task Forces, the Legislature, AAA of Washington, Department of Licensing, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington Trucking Association, and the Washington Traffic Safety Commission.



*“We envision  
a safe and efficient  
surface transportation system  
with no deaths or disabling injuries.”*

Vision of Target Zero





## EMPHASIS AREAS

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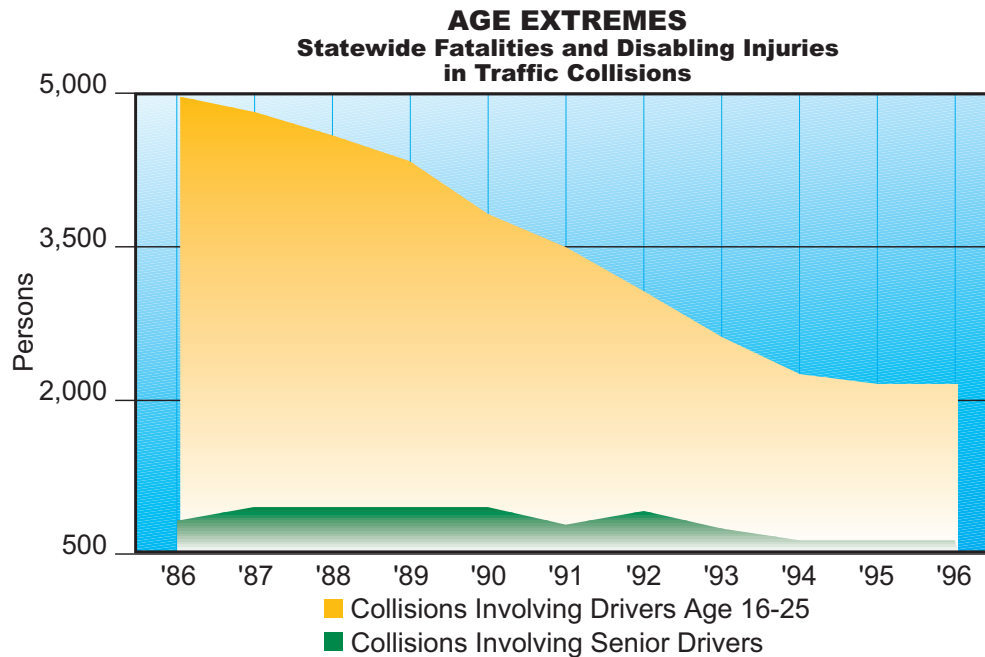
### The 12 Emphasis Areas and Key Objectives

Washington State will work to improve the safety of all roads and highways by focusing on the following emphasis areas and key objectives:

<b>Age Extremes</b>	Identify those most at risk and develop specific crash reduction programs.
<b>Aggressive Drivers</b>	Determine the frequency of road crashes related to aggressive driving and develop appropriate counter-measures.
<b>Bicycle Safety</b>	Develop programs and implement laws to make the roads safer for bicyclists.
<b>Data and Technology</b>	Require better programs for the collection and distribution of statewide traffic collision data.
<b>Emergency Response</b>	Set appropriate response times and training for emergency services.
<b>Impaired Drivers</b>	Discourage this as socially acceptable behavior.
<b>Large Trucks</b>	Increase enforcement and education, and encourage safe interaction between cars and large trucks.
<b>Pedestrian Safety</b>	Collaborate to design better pedestrian facilities.
<b>Road Environment</b>	Identify and maintain the overall quality and safety standards of the road, especially in high accident locations.
<b>Safety Restraints</b>	Focus on the proper use of child safety restraints, and increasing Washington's seat belt use.
<b>Sleepy Drivers</b>	Develop a better understanding of driving while fatigued and awareness of its dangers, and implement appropriate educational and engineering programs.
<b>Work Zones</b>	Develop programs to ensure the overall safety of motorists and road workers.

Drivers ages 16 to 25 still constitute the largest single group of traffic fatalities. Male drivers are over-represented even though fatalities are beginning to decline. The 16 to 25 age group also has the highest injury rate.

Given their comparatively low levels of travel, senior drivers also tend to be over-represented in crash rates.

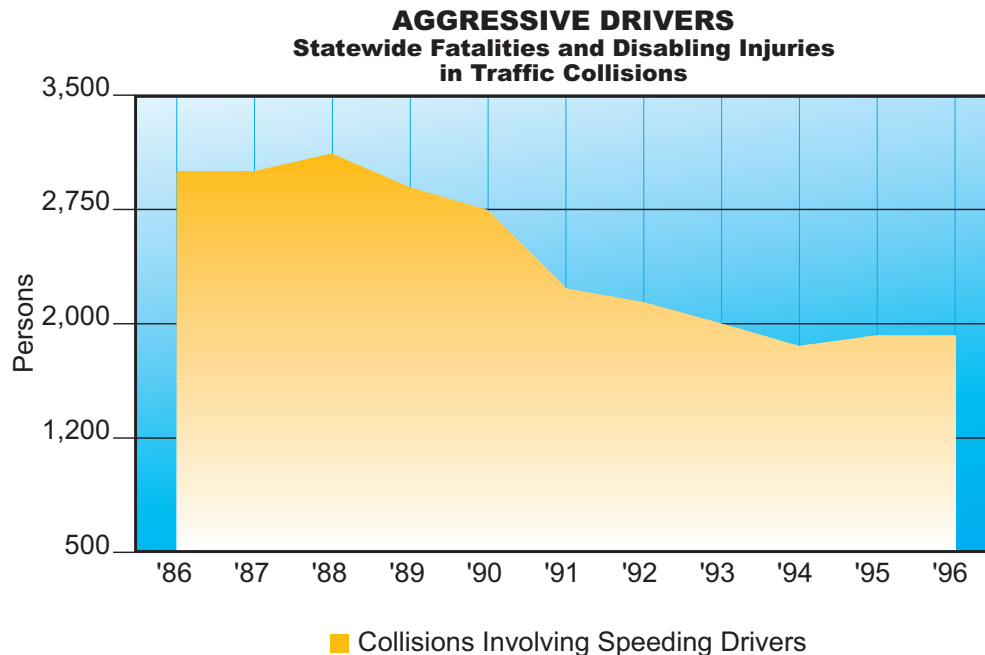


## Strategies

- Support the Graduated Driver's Licensing (GDL) program.
- Develop a process whereby physicians can assess driving ability and notify the Department of Licensing if a driver is unsafe because of medical conditions and/or visual capabilities.
- Establish funding sources to support the continued development and use of advanced technology to enhance high school driving programs.
- Create and implement a driver safety education program for middle school students.
- Revise the certification process for driver training schools to include more stringent educational teaching requirements.

According to 1996 police reports, speeding was a major contributor in approximately 236 traffic fatalities that year. The majority of violations noted by police include right-of-way violations, exceeding safe speed, following too closely, and inattention.

Speeding remains a major factor in over 30 percent of traffic fatalities and disabling injuries.



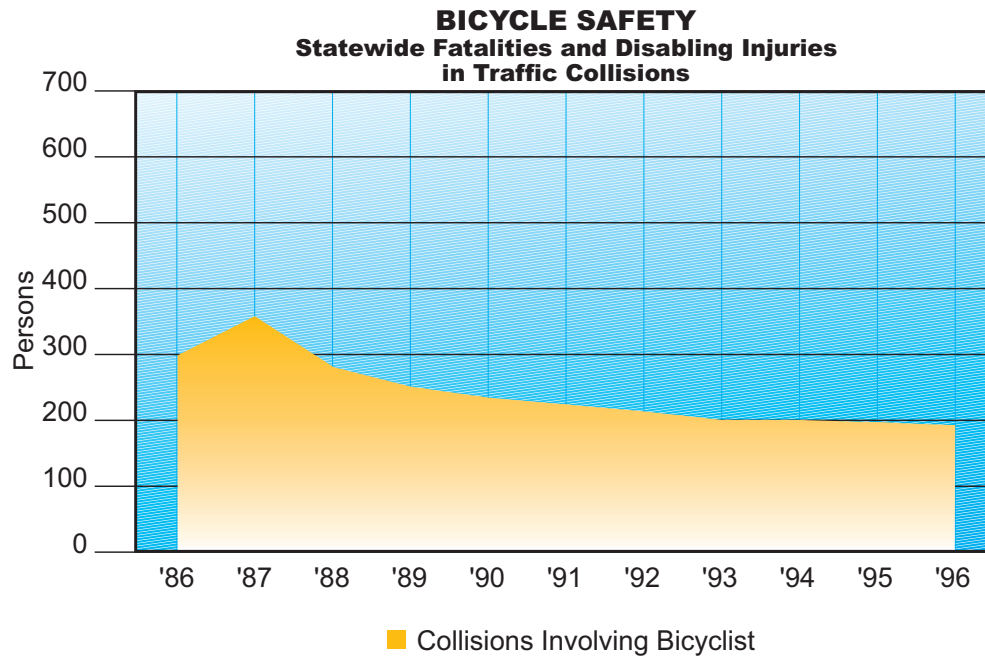
## Strategies

- Sponsor a statewide conference on road rage.
- Continue to endorse statewide Road Rage/Aggressive Driving Committee activities.
- Enhance Intelligent Transportation System activities, including the provision of real-time traffic information to ease traffic congestion and photo radar programs to reduce driver speeds.
- Support stronger enforcement against aggressive and speeding drivers, especially in sensitive areas such as work zones, school zones, and ferry facilities.



While 3 percent of all traffic deaths and disabling injuries in 1996 involved bicyclists, 98 percent of those bicyclists were injured or killed.

Bicyclists ages 5 to 14 were involved in the highest rate of traffic collisions.



## Strategies

- Increase the availability of bicycle safety education, especially for young people.
- Increase enforcement related to bicycling (for bicyclist and motorists).
- Encourage the use of bicycle safety equipment by initiating helmet laws and promoting the use of helmets and bicycle lights.
- Provide more facilities for people to bike, including bikeways, trails, shoulders, and bike lanes.
- Improve initial and continual driver education on how to share the road with bicyclists.

The collection of statewide traffic collision data is the key to measuring the effects of traffic safety programs and initiatives. The Target Zero plan not only focuses on strategies and issues that reduce crashes but also attends to the collection of data and measurement of successes.

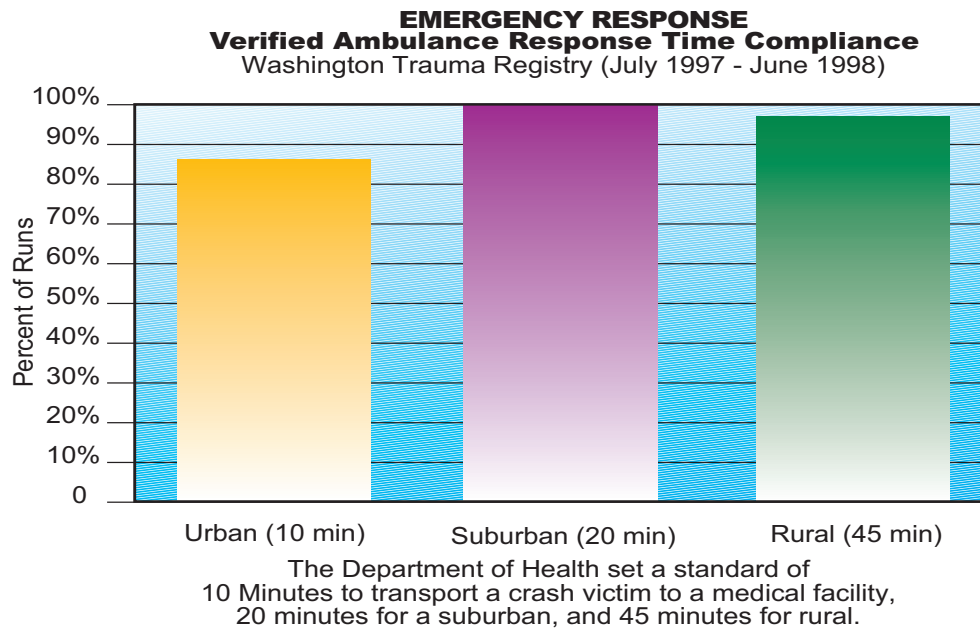


## Strategies

- Washington Traffic Safety Commissioners should charter an oversight technical team to review the status of crash data collection and distribution procedures and consider the following activities:
  - standardize terms used in roadway databases (i.e. create a data dictionary).
  - develop short- and long-term solutions to share data and make information more accessible.
  - secure coordination of all associated agencies.
  - include users in the process.
  - review nationwide trends in traffic data collection procedures.
  - identify and develop a clearinghouse for roadway traffic collision data, including information on other associated factors (e.g., emergency response times and severity of injuries).
  - ensure base levels of technology for all databases.
  - guarantee that the collection of data is accurate, flexible, and timely.
- Provide resources to develop and maintain vehicle collision records for all roadways that are current, complete, and have a base level of information, including Geographic Information Systems data to identify the location of a crash.

Some crash victims die before Emergency Medical Service (EMS) technicians arrive at a crash scene.

The Department of Health, in cooperation with the EMS community, supports a medical service system which assures that the required programs are developed to deliver the “right” patient to the “right” facility in the “right” amount of time.



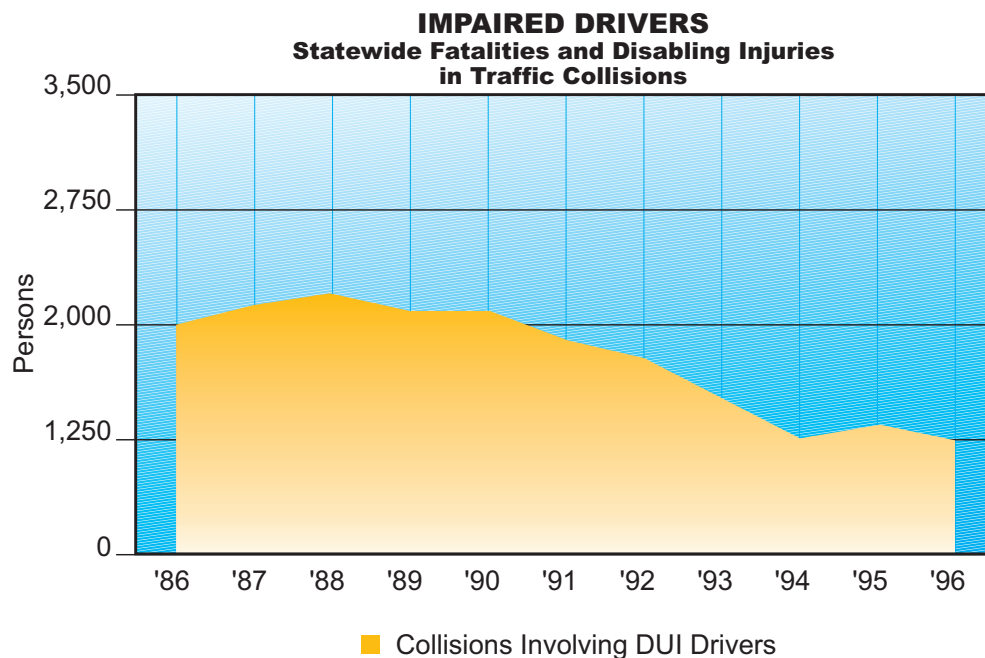
## Strategies

- Provide opportunities and funding for emergency training of local Emergency Medical Service volunteers.
- Provide funding for equipment for local emergency response volunteers including “Jump Kits” for volunteers who respond from home.
- Enhance the statewide emergency helicopter plan to include more landing sites along state and local highways.
- Provide emergency training for law enforcement and others that may arrive first to an emergency situation.
- Work to coordinate communication systems, common frequencies, and cross communications among agencies responding to emergency situations.
- Install location devices in law enforcement and emergency vehicles.
- Work with local and state highway departments to educate law enforcement and emergency staff on how to better identify crash locations on roads and highways.
- Work with highway departments to strategically locate video cameras on state and local highways to better identify crash sites.



Even with tougher legal limitations and extensive educational campaigns, 33 percent of 1996 traffic fatalities and disabling injuries involved an illegal blood alcohol concentration (BAC).

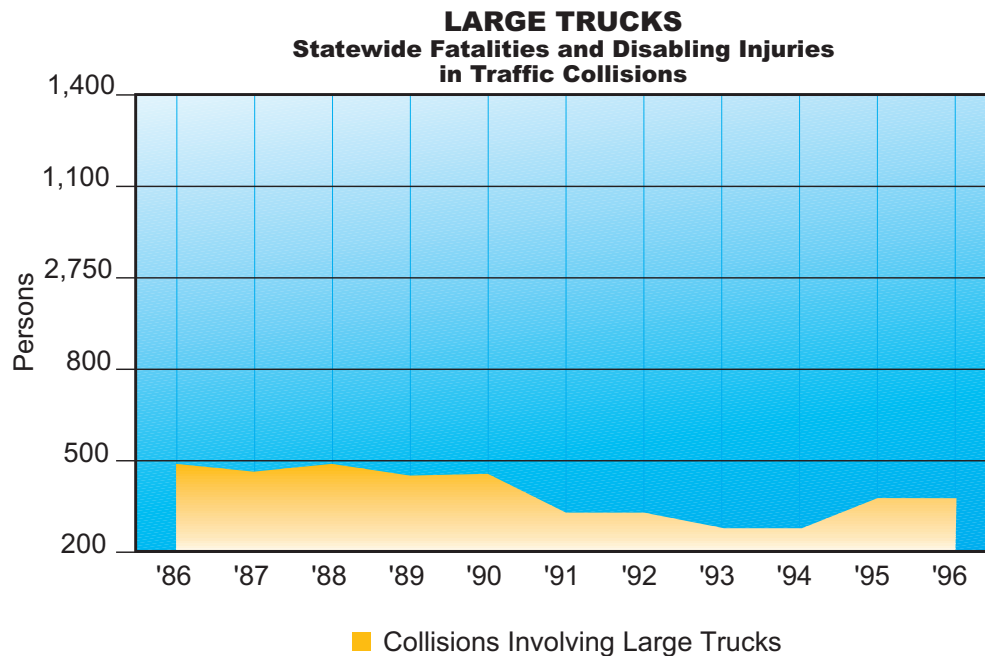
With recent passage of a new Washington law that lowered the legal blood alcohol level from .10 to .08, drivers with a BAC of .08 or above can be arrested for driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol. BAC is the ratio of alcohol to blood and is measured with a test of a driver's breath or blood.



## Strategies

- Enhance the judicial process that identifies and effectively disarms offenders with multiple DUIs.
- Support the use of sobriety check points by law enforcement officials.
- Encourage stronger enforcement of drunk drivers by including mandatory treatment programs and tougher DUI Deferred Prosecution procedures.
- Enhance DUI awareness in youth driver training curricula.
- Provide support for additional local DUI and Traffic Safety Task Force programs.
- Promote the research and integration of advanced technology in the enforcement of DUI.

Large trucks are involved in approximately 6 percent of all roadway fatalities and disabling injuries. The risk of death and injury in the “other vehicle” is higher in these crashes.

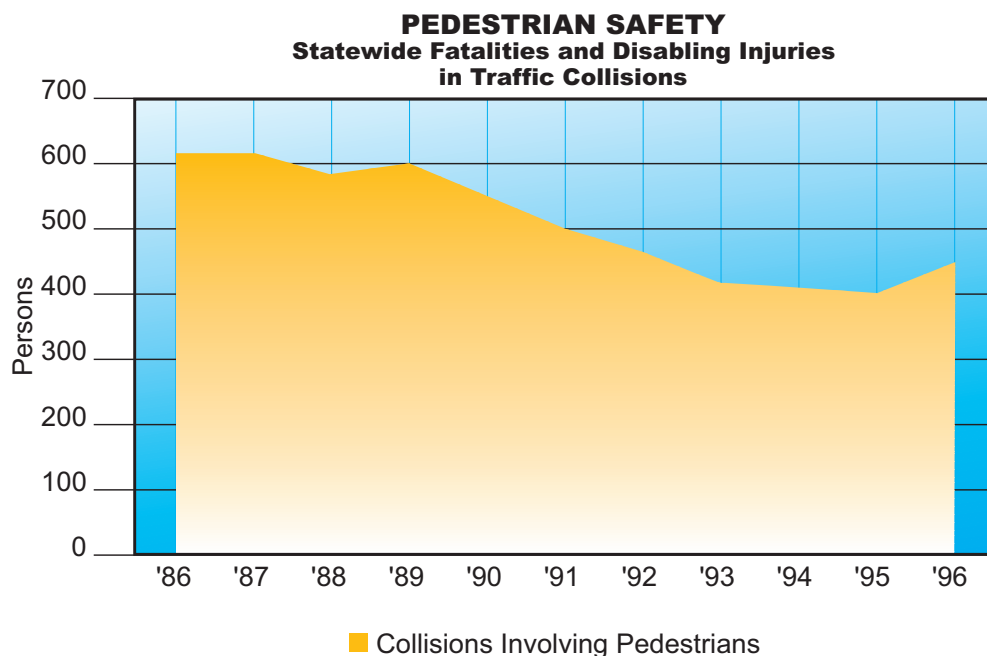


## Strategies

- Support the current Washington State Patrol Commercial Vehicle Division plan.
- Increase safety compliance through driver contacts and vehicle inspections.
- Increase the number of educational contacts to the trucking industry and the public.
- Increase enforcement on overweight vehicles.
- Increase enforcement on trucks over the legal permitted load.
- Expedite movement of commercial vehicles through weighing facilities.
- Promote safe on-road interaction between cars and large trucks.

In 1996, 515 pedestrians were killed or seriously injured in traffic related crashes. That year, approximately 13 percent of all those who died in traffic were pedestrians. Most deaths occurred in urban settings, away from intersections, in normal weather, and at night.

Pedestrian safety will focus on a 1999 report. The report, called *Recommendations to Reduce Pedestrian Collisions*, was prepared for the Washington Quality Initiative with assistance from the Washington State Department of Transportation.



## Strategies

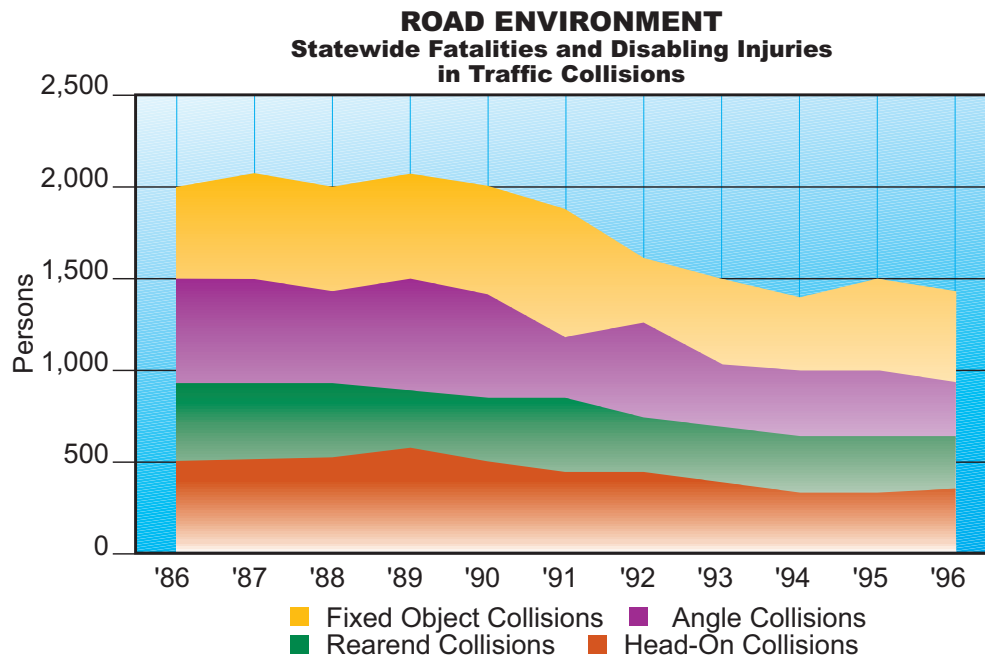
The *Recommendations to Reduce Pedestrian Collisions* report concentrates on three key priorities:

- Improving driver and pedestrian safety education.
- Providing enough improvement dollars for pedestrian facilities.
- Challenging cities to plan and design for pedestrians and not just the fast movement of motor vehicles.

Joint pilot projects launched with local jurisdictions will significantly improve pedestrian safety programs and practices throughout the state.



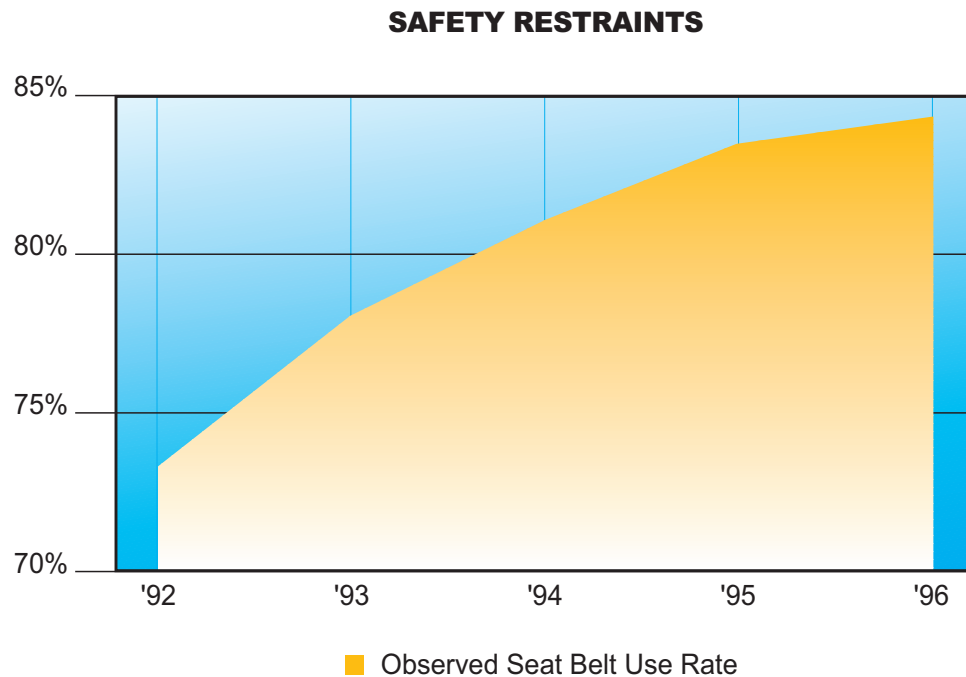
Although roads and highways are of higher quality than ever before, road and environmental factors contribute to approximately one third of all traffic fatalities and disabling injuries.



## Strategies

- Expand the statewide Corridor Safety Program to address traffic safety problems in more local communities.
- Train city, county, and state traffic engineers and planners to identify traffic safety problems, conduct data analyses, and develop solutions.
- Partner with utility companies and state and local agencies to develop safer and more stringent policies for the location of utility poles.
- Improve signing and delineation of roadways for the motoring public.
- Develop programs and partnerships to identify and implement statewide safety projects (e.g., remove unsafe guardrails) on local roadways.
- Review access management regulations to ensure the safest right of entry for the motoring public.
- Design and construct divided highways to clearly indicate turnarounds for emergency response vehicles.

Two-thirds of people killed in Washington traffic crashes were not wearing seat belts. Three out of four of these people would have survived had they simply been wearing their seat belt!

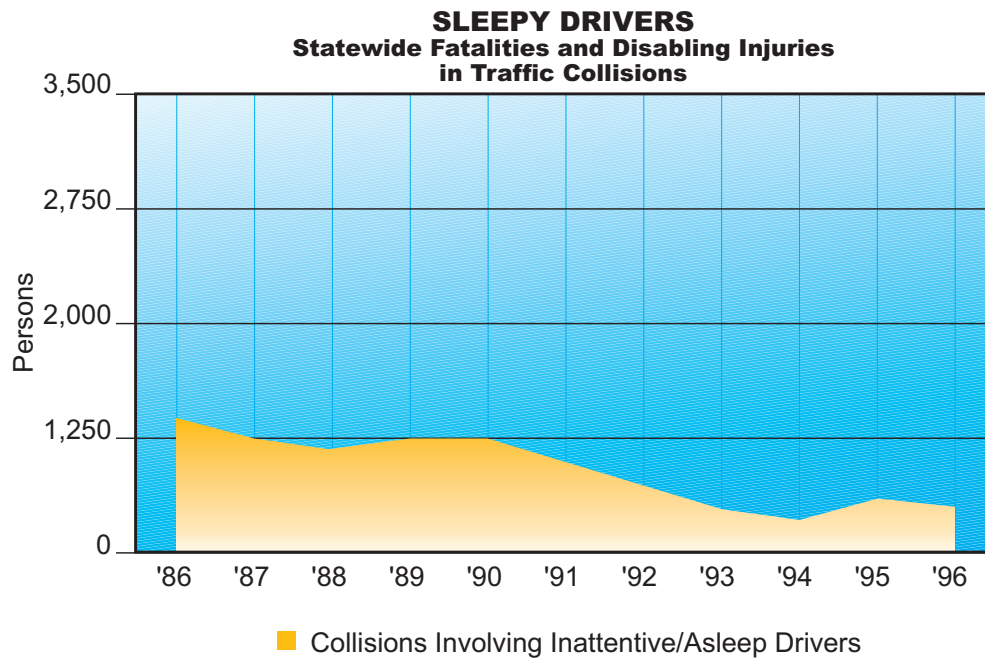


## Strategies

- Continue to support the passage of an effective primary seat belt law.
- Create and promote official sites for the inspection of child safety car seats, seat belts, and other traffic safety devices.
- Educate drivers, insurance carriers, and car dealers on the importance of replacing safety restraints after a car crash.
- Continue and enhance promotional campaigns to educate students and the general public on when safety restraints are a requirement and when and why safety restraints are not, i.e., in motor homes, buses, limousines, shuttles, cargo areas of pick-up trucks.
- Work with the insurance commissioner and insurance industry to obtain financial support for campaigns to educate consumers on the importance and proper use of safety restraints.
- Develop awareness training for judicial professionals who deal with safety restraint enforcement.

Sleepy drivers cause a significant number of highway crashes. Sleepiness or fatigue is a factor in around 14 percent of police-reported crashes.

Target Zero Steering Committee Members recognize that no single solution exists to the problem of sleepy driving. There are many causes of driver drowsiness and many levels at which intervention can prevent a sleepy driver crash.

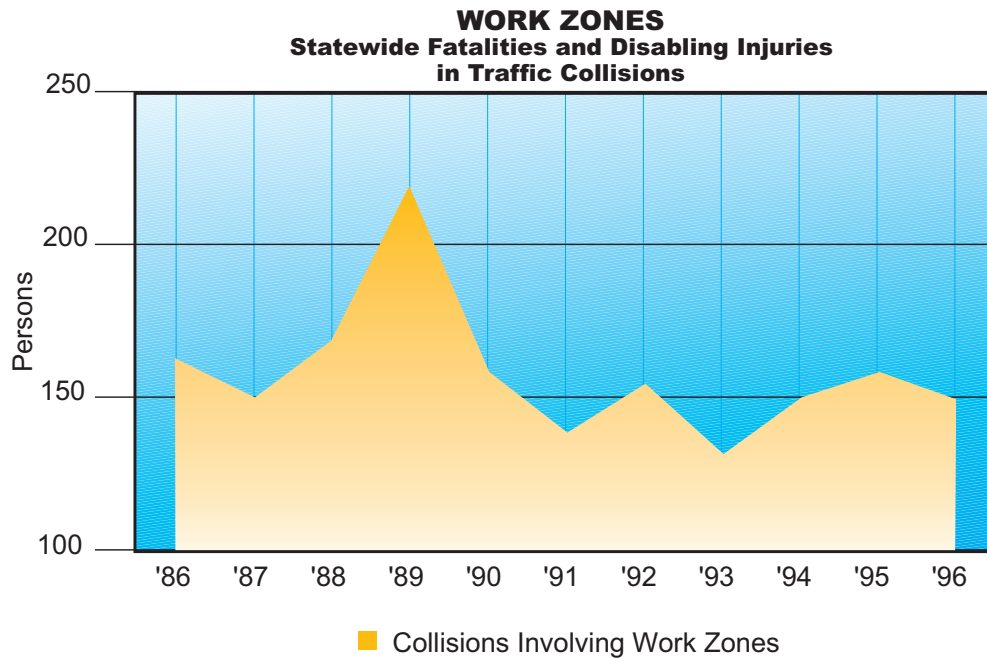


## Strategies

- Increase the use of rumble strips on shoulders and center lines to prevent sleepy driver crashes by alerting drivers before they leave the road or cross the center line.
- Develop public education and awareness countermeasures directed at target populations to prevent sleepy driving and the crashes that result from fatigued drivers.
- Support federal mandates that promote safe driving time limits for commercial vehicles.
- Develop long-range plans to identify funding for and improvements to highway rest areas to accommodate commercial vehicle drivers and the public.

Even functionally safe work zones can create safety risks for both roadway workers and motorists. Data indicate that 3 percent of 1996 traffic fatalities and disabling injuries involved a roadway work zone.

Motorists who are unsure of zone traffic control devices or ignore enforcement guidelines are the main cause of crashes in work zones. Workers are more vulnerable to injury and more susceptible to death than motorists.



## Strategies

- Ensure roadway construction, maintenance and utility, and developer work zone designs result in effective traffic control for the motorist which includes:
  - advance warning
  - understandable guidance
  - visible delineation
  - consistency between jurisdictions
  - an informed public
  - regular reviews of work zones
  - cost effective standard geometry
- Emphasize enforcement in work zones to ensure motorists obey laws and traffic control devices.
- Ensure worker protection in work zones by including buffers, barriers, detours, and route closures as appropriate for specific projects.
- Work with public agencies and organizations worldwide to identify best safety practices for work zones.
- Teach work zone driver safety in driver education classes for both young and older drivers.



## Target Zero — A Strategic Plan for Highway Safety

As the strategies in this document suggest, there is no single solution for the prevention of traffic fatalities and disabling injuries. There are many causes of driver crashes and many levels at which intervention can prevent a crash. The following are additional strategies to consider:

- Examine the affect of cell phones on safety while driving.
- Require a special endorsement to drive a motor home that is longer than a specified length.
- Enlist the help of the media, especially radio announcers, to use the word “crash” vs. “accident” during news and traffic reports.
- Develop measures to reduce crashes involving unlicensed drivers.



*Environmental factors contribute significantly to traffic fatalities and disabling injuries*

Target Zero provides guidance to all agencies, groups, and individuals working in the field of traffic safety for development of their programs and projects. Short-term actions include:

- Incorporation of Target Zero initiatives into the plans and programs of key traffic safety agencies.
- Commitment of agency resources and funding for Target Zero strategies.
- Identification of indicators to measure the effects of Target Zero initiatives.
- Disclosure of information including progress reports on the implementation of strategies and the impact on statewide traffic safety.
- Support agencies, groups, and individuals working together to implement Target Zero strategies.

*Work with other public agencies and organizations worldwide to identify best safety practices.*



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*Support stronger enforcement against aggressive and speeding drivers, especially in sensitive areas such as work zones, school zones, and ferry facilities.*



**Age Extremes**

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 Don Whitehouse, Washington State Department of Transportation

*"We envision a safe and efficient  
 surface transportation system with  
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*Vision of Target Zero*





